

STEP INTO READING®

reading on your own

STEP

3

THE BRAVEST DOG EVER

The True Story of

BALTO



By Natalie Standiford • Illustrated by Donald Cook

THIS BOOK BELONGS TO

your name here!

3 of my favorite books

1

2

3

Here is a picture of me
after I finish a great book!



Dear Parent:

Congratulations! Your child is taking the first steps on an exciting journey. The destination? Independent reading!

STEP INTO READING® will help your child get there. The program offers five steps to reading success. Each step includes fun stories and colorful art. There are also Step into Reading Sticker Books, Step into Reading Math Readers, Step into Reading Write-In Readers, Step into Reading Phonics Readers, and Step into Reading Phonics First Steps! Boxed Sets—a complete literacy program with something for every child.

Learning to Read, Step by Step!



Ready to Read Preschool–Kindergarten

• big type and easy words • rhyme and rhythm • picture clues

For children who know the alphabet and are eager to begin reading.



Reading with Help Preschool–Grade 1

• basic vocabulary • short sentences • simple stories

For children who recognize familiar words and sound out new words with help.



Reading on Your Own Grades 1–3

• engaging characters • easy-to-follow plots • popular topics

For children who are ready to read on their own.



Reading Paragraphs Grades 2–3

• challenging vocabulary • short paragraphs • exciting stories

For newly independent readers who read simple sentences with confidence.



Ready for Chapters Grades 2–4

• chapters • longer paragraphs • full-color art

For children who want to take the plunge into chapter books but still like colorful pictures.

STEP INTO READING® is designed to give every child a successful reading experience. The grade levels are only guides. Children can progress through the steps at their own speed, developing confidence in their reading, no matter what their grade.

Remember, a lifetime love of reading starts with a single step!

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Published in the United States by Random House Children's Books,
a division of Random House, Inc., New York, and simultaneously
in Canada by Random House of Canada Limited, Toronto.
www.stepintoreading.com

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Standiford, Natalie.

The bravest dog ever : the true story of Balto / by Natalie Standiford ;
illustrated by Donald Cook. p. cm. — (Step into reading. A step 3 book)

SUMMARY: Recounts the life of Balto, the sled dog who braved a snowstorm
to deliver medicine to Nome, Alaska, during a 1925 diphtheria epidemic.
ISBN 0-394-89695-5 (pbk.) — ISBN 0-394-99695-X (lib. bdg.)

1. Balto (Dog)—Juvenile literature.

2. Sled dogs—Alaska—Nome—Biography—Juvenile literature.

3. Diphtheria—Alaska—Nome—Prevention—Juvenile literature.

[1. Balto (Dog) 2. Sled dogs. 3. Dogs. 4. Diphtheria—Alaska—Nome.

5. Alaska—History—1867–1959.]

I. Cook, Donald, ill. II. Title. III. Series: Step into reading. Step 3 book.

SF428.7 .S7 2003 636.73—dc21 2002013216

Printed in the United States of America

75 74 73 72 71 70 69 68

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THE BRAVEST DOG EVER


The True Story of

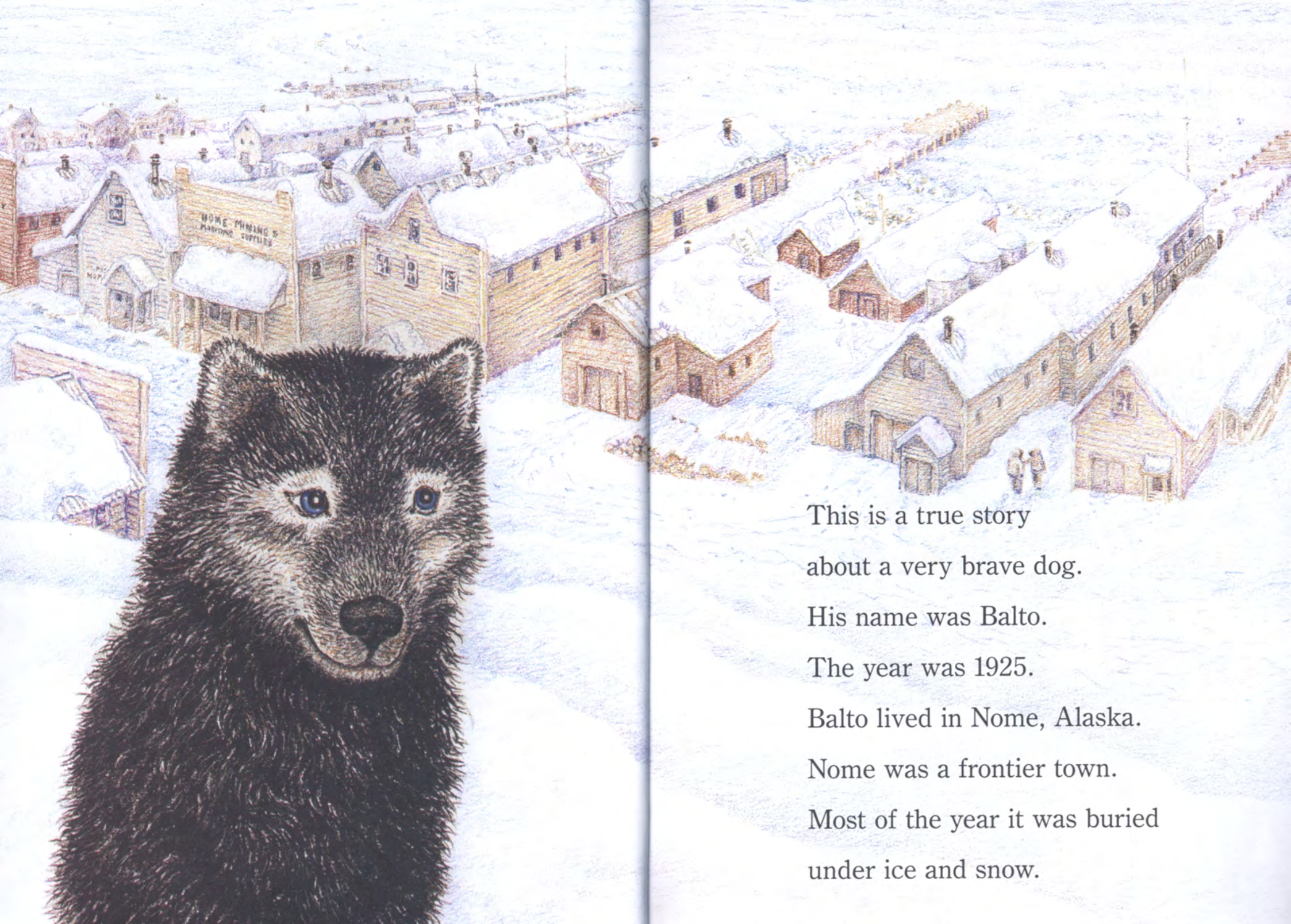
BALTO

by Natalie Standiford

illustrated by Donald Cook



Random House  New York



This is a true story
about a very brave dog.
His name was Balto.
The year was 1925.
Balto lived in Nome, Alaska.
Nome was a frontier town.
Most of the year it was buried
under ice and snow.

In winter there was no way
to travel through all that ice and snow.
Not on planes or trains or boats or cars.
The only way to travel in Alaska
was by dog sled.



Balto was a sled dog.
He worked for a gold-mining company
not far from Nome.
He helped carry food and tools
to the miners.
It was a good life for a sled dog.





Balto's driver was named Gunnar.
Gunnar made Balto his lead dog.
The lead dog runs in front
of the team.
He follows the trail.

All the other dogs do
whatever the lead dog does.
So the lead dog has to be
the smartest and strongest dog of all.



One cold winter day
a terrible thing happened in Nome.
Two children got very sick.



Their parents called the doctor.
He was the only doctor
in the whole town.

When the doctor saw the children
he was very worried.
The children had a terrible sickness.
It was called diphtheria (dif-THEER-ee-ah).
The doctor did not have
the medicine he needed.
Without the medicine
the children would die.
Without the medicine
many other people in Nome
would get diphtheria and die too.
The doctor knew
he had to get some medicine—fast.

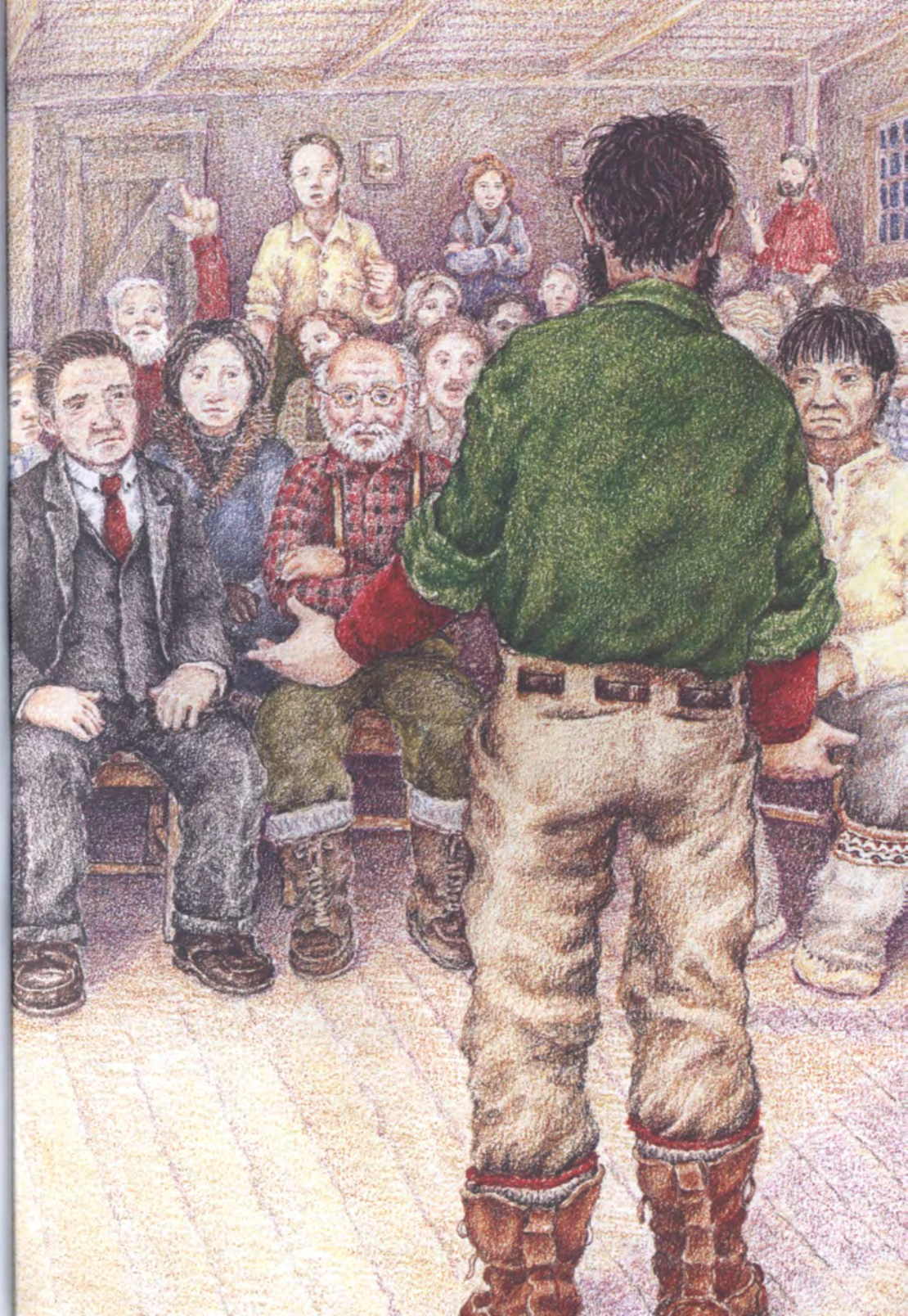




The hospital in Anchorage, Alaska,
had the medicine.
But Anchorage was 800 miles away.
The doctors in Anchorage
put the medicine on a train.

But soon the train got stuck
in the deep snow.
The train was still 700 miles
from Nome!

The people of Nome held a meeting.
Everyone was very scared.
“What are we going to do?”
asked the doctor.
“We have to get that medicine.”
At last someone said,
“What about a dog-sled relay?”
When one team of dogs gets tired,
a new team will be ready to take over.”
The room buzzed with excitement.
That did seem like the quickest way
to get the medicine.
But the doctor frowned.
“It will still take about fifteen days.
That’s a long time. Too long.”



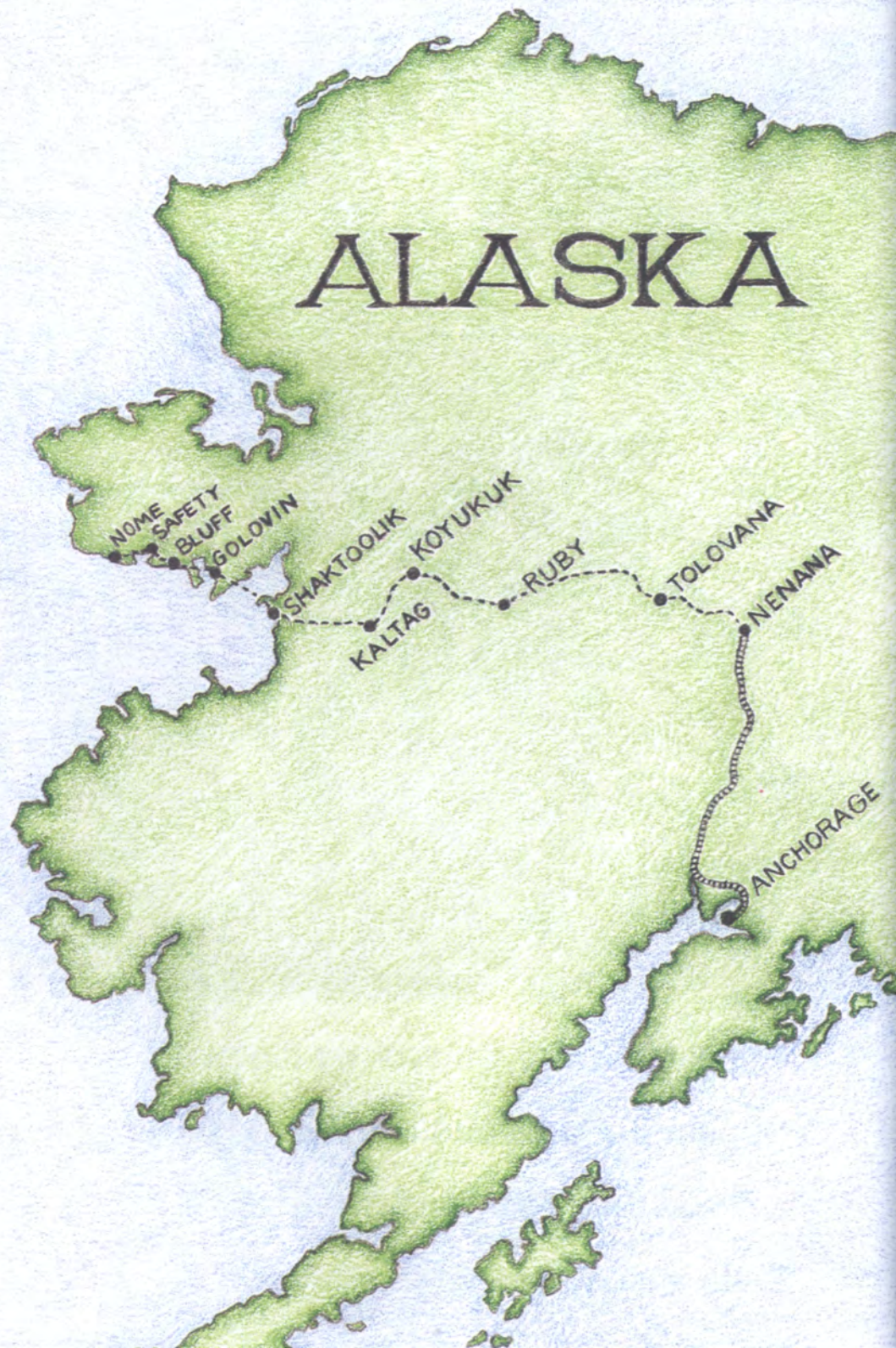


Maybe the doctor was right.
But there was no other choice.
So the mayor spoke over the radio.
"Please help!" he said.
"We need the best drivers and dogs
to help save our town!"



Gunnar heard the mayor on the radio.
Gunnar knew he had the best dog team
and the best lead dog.
Balto would come to the rescue.

ALASKA



On January 27, 1925,
the race to Nome began.

Twenty-one dog teams
were in the relay.

Each team waited at a different stop.



0 100 200 300

The first driver took the medicine
from the train.
He wrapped it in fur
to keep it from freezing.
Then he drove his dogs
as fast as he could to the second stop.
He made his run in good time.



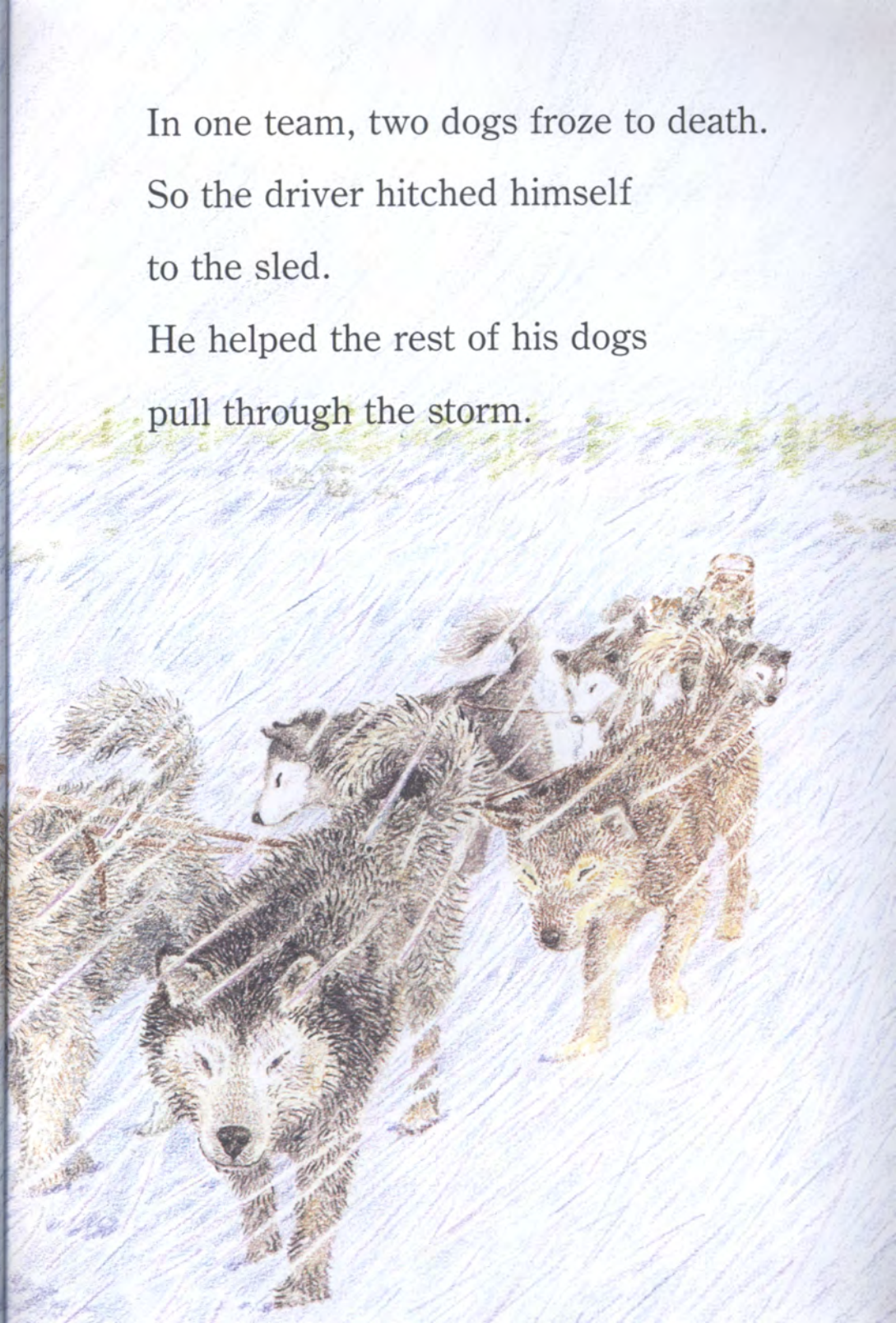
But soon the wind began to blow hard.
The air grew colder.
A blizzard was coming!
It was one of the worst storms ever.
Still the race went on.
Somehow each dog team made it
to the next stop.



In one team, two dogs froze to death.

So the driver hitched himself
to the sled.

He helped the rest of his dogs
pull through the storm.



Gunnar and Balto waited
at their stop in Bluff.

They were going to run 31 miles
from Bluff to Point Safety.

That was the second-to-last part
of the race.

But the storm had slowed things down.

Gunnar had been waiting for two days.

He did not sleep.

He wanted to be ready to go
as soon as the medicine arrived.





At last Gunnar heard dogs barking.
The medicine was here!
He put it on the sled
with a small stove and a little food.
Then he hitched up his dogs.
Balto stood proudly in the lead.

Gunnar cracked his whip.
“Mush!” he cried.
That meant “go.”
The team ran out into the snowy night.



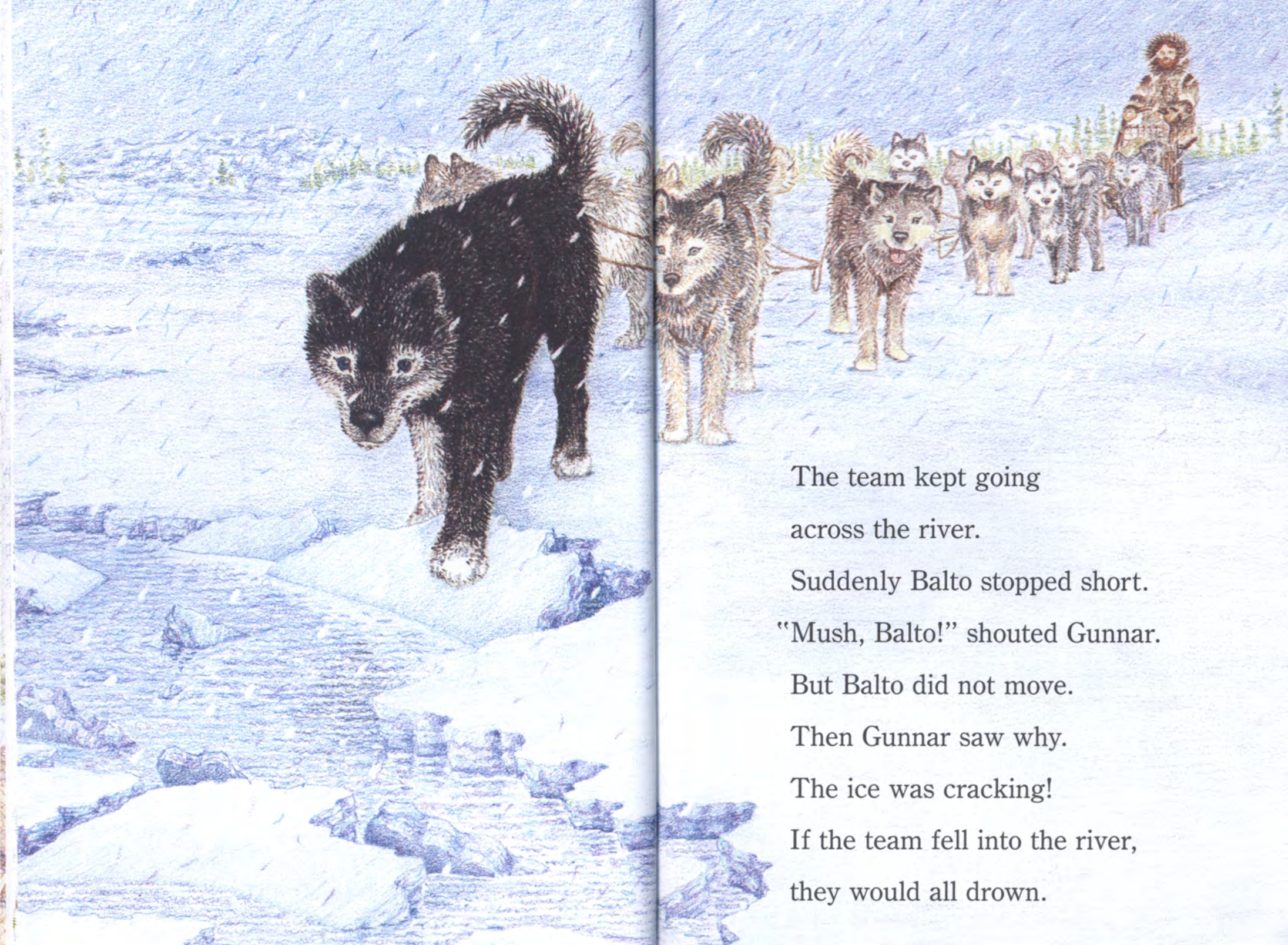
At first the team made good time.
But soon snowdrifts blocked the trail.
The dogs sank up to their necks
in snow.
They could not move.
Some began to panic.
But not Balto.
He stayed calm.
That helped the other dogs
while Gunnar dug them out
of the snow.
At last the team was on its way again.



Then the team crossed a frozen river.
The dogs and the sled
slipped and skidded on the ice.
Oh, no! Over went the sled.
Gunnar got it up again.
But the medicine was gone!



Wildly Gunnar dug for the medicine.
He could not see
through the heavy snow.
But at last he felt the package.
He put it back on the sled.



The team kept going
across the river.

Suddenly Balto stopped short.
“Mush, Balto!” shouted Gunnar.

But Balto did not move.

Then Gunnar saw why.

The ice was cracking!

If the team fell into the river,
they would all drown.

Balto had stopped just in time.
"Smart dog!" Gunnar told him.
Then he saw that Balto's feet were wet.
If they froze,
Balto would never walk again.
Quickly Gunnar unhitched Balto
from the sled.



He led the dog
to a patch of powdery snow.
Gunnar rubbed Balto's paws
in the powder.
Soon they were dry.
Balto was ready to go once more.



Balto led the team
around the cracking ice.

At last they reached
solid land again.

Were they still on the trail?

Gunnar had no idea.

The snow blew so hard,

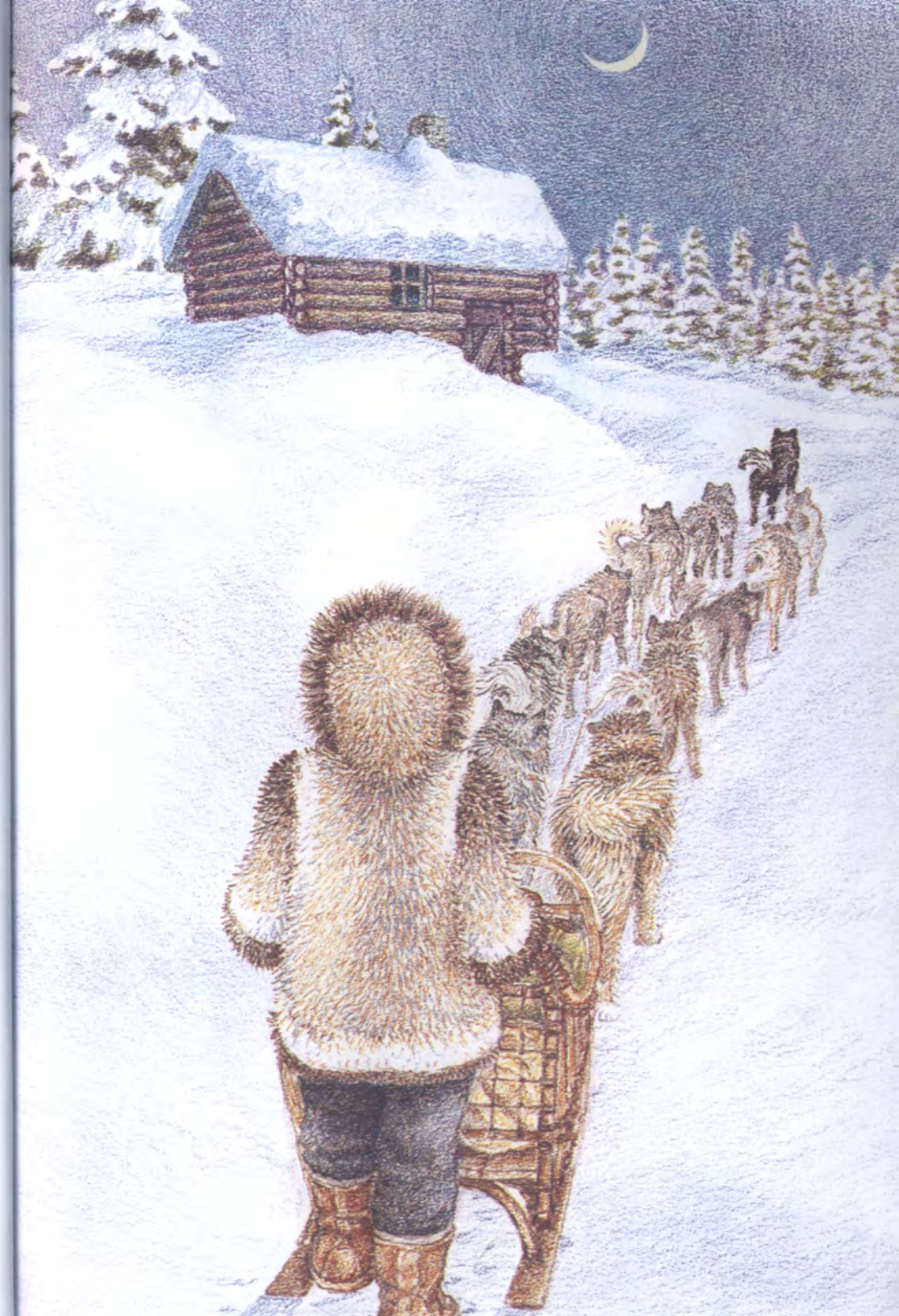
Gunnar could not see
his own hands.



But Balto had run this trail
many times before.

Now it was all up to him.

Finally the storm died down.
Gunnar saw Point Safety just ahead.
“Balto did it!” thought Gunnar.
He couldn’t wait to warm his hands
by a cozy fire.
But all the lights were out
at Point Safety.
Was the next driver there?
Gunnar did not know.
And there was no time to find out.
So Gunnar and Balto did not stop.
They had never been so tired.
But they raced on through the night
toward Nome.



It was just before dawn.
The sky began to glow.
In the town of Nome
everyone was sleeping.



Gunnar and his team pulled into town.
They had made it!
Balto was too tired to bark.
They had been on the trail
for 20 hours straight.
They had driven 53 miles!





Gunnar took the medicine to the doctor.

The doctor was surprised.

He thought it would take 15 days
to get the medicine.

But Gunnar delivered it
after only five and a half days!

"Thank you, Gunnar!" said the doctor.

"You are a hero!"

"Balto is the hero," said Gunnar.

"I could not have done it without him."



The doctor went right to work.
He gave the medicine
to all the sick people.
In a few days they would be well.
The town of Nome was saved.



All over America
people cheered for Balto.
They read about his bravery
in the newspaper.
Balto was the most famous dog
in the world.

A year later
the people of New York City
put up a statue of Balto.
It still stands in Central Park.
Lots of children play on the statue.
They remember Balto,
the bravest dog ever!



If you are reading on your own
and are ready for longer stories,
look for these Step into Reading books:

ABE LINCOLN'S HAT
ALLIGATORS: LIFE IN THE WILD
ARTHUR AND THE SCHOOL PET □
ARTHUR, CLEAN YOUR ROOM! □
ARTHUR IN A PICKLE □
ARTHUR TRICKS THE TOOTH FAIRY □
ARTHUR'S BACK-TO-SCHOOL
SURPRISE □
ARTHUR'S FIRE DRILL □
ARTHUR'S FIRST KISS □
ARTHUR'S HICCUPS □
ARTHUR'S LOST PUPPY □
ARTHUR'S READING RACE □
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BEANS BAKER BOUNCES BACK
BEANS BAKER, NUMBER FIVE
BEARS: LIFE IN THE WILD
THE BERENSTAIN BEARS AND THE
MISSING WATERMELON MONEY
THE BERENSTAIN BEARS AND THE
TIC-TAC-TOE MYSTERY
THE BEST MISTAKE EVER!
And Other Stories
THE BRAVEST DOG EVER
The True Story of Balto
BULLY TROUBLE
BUZZ VS. TORQUE: One on One ☆
CHICKEN FOR A DAY
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THE FIRST THANKSGIVING
GEORGE WASHINGTON AND THE
GENERAL'S DOG
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GORILLAS: Gentle Giants of the Forest
HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY, MISS HILDY!
THE HEADLESS HORSEMAN
HEAVY-DUTY TRUCKS
HECTOR'S HICCUPS
HUNGRY, HUNGRY SHARKS
IT'S NOT MARSHA'S BIRTHDAY
JOHNNY APPLESEED: My Story
LEWIS AND CLARK: A Prairie Dog for
the President
LITTLE WITCH GOES TO SCHOOL
LITTLE WITCH'S BAD DREAM
LITTLE WITCH'S BIG NIGHT
LUCKY STAR
THE MAGIC APPLE
MARSHA IS ONLY A FLOWER
MARSHA MAKES ME SICK
MISS HILDY'S MISSING CAPE CAPER
THE MISSING TOOTH
MOLLY THE BRAVE AND ME
MONSTER BUGS
MUD SOUP
NO HOWLING IN THE HOUSE ○
NORMA JEAN, JUMPING BEAN
THE NUTCRACKER BALLET
THE PARAKEET GIRL
PIONEER BEAR
PURPLE PICKLE JUICE ○
SAMANTHA THE SNOB
SHINING STAR
S-S-SNAKES!
THE SURPRISE PARTY
THE TRUE STORY OF POCAHONTAS
TWISTERS!
WHALES: The Gentle Giants
WILD, WILD WOLVES

- An Arthur Step into Reading Sticker Book
- ☆ A Barbie Reader
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STEP
3

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reading on your own

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Pick your favorite
spot to read.
This is going to be
a great book!

What this book is about . . .

The Bravest Dog Ever: The True Story of Balto

Balto leads the dogsled team that is
carrying medicine for very sick children.
Will he make it through the blizzard in time?



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ISBN 0-394-89695-5

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